



Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities
and related developmental disabilities

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Testimony before the Judiciary Committee:

**H.B. #6440 (Raised), "An Act Concerning Applications for
Guardianship of an Adult with Intellectual Disabilities and Statutory
Changes Related to Intellectual Disabilities"**

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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and Members of the Judiciary
Committee:

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I am Lynn Warner, Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 59 year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and related developmental disabilities throughout Connecticut.

Immediate Past President
Ken Cholewinski
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**I am here today to testify in support of H.B. 6440, "An Act Concerning
Applications for Guardianship of an Adult with Intellectual Disabilities
and Statutory Changes Related to Intellectual Disabilities."**

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By providing that an application for guardianship of a young adult with intellectual disabilities be permitted one hundred and eighty days prior to the date of his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday and that the approved application become effective on that date; this action will help protect the continuity and continuation of supports and services of young adults with intellectual disabilities.

For example, young adults with intellectual disabilities are legally able to attend school until the age of twenty-one (21) provided that they have strong advocacy and the input of their families or guardians. If there is a gap in guardianship when a person becomes 18, the schools no longer have to communicate with families or guardians and precious education and services could be lost. If a student is allowed to continue in school, his /her ability to become a more productive member of society increases.

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There are waiting lists for adult services from the Department of Developmental Services, so allowing for supports to continue in school – also keeps students active and learning in addition to being supported. This just makes sense for everybody.

Additionally, we are in strong support of changing all of the statutory references of 'mental retardation' to intellectual disability; as retardation and all of the derivatives of the r-word are now considered insulting and pejorative, especially by the people who have intellectual disabilities.

Connecticut would be in good company should it vote to make this change. In October 2010, President Obama signed *Rosa's Law*, which mandated changing references in federal laws from mental retardation to intellectual disability and references to the mentally retarded to people with intellectual disabilities. This type of language change acknowledges the person *not* the disability and eliminates the hurtful terminology and suggestions. The disability community in Connecticut and all over the country, along with the self advocates who receive supports and services, are anxious to make these changes and relegate these words to history.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. On behalf of The Arc of Connecticut, I urge you to vote favorably on H.B. 6440.